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REMARKS on the Examination of

Exposition of the Second Article of our Church.

By GILBERT Bishop of SARUM



IT would almost discourage a man from venturing on the doing any Service to the publick, to see how I am treated by some, whom to my knowledge I have never offended. The Sharpness of Stile, and the wresting of my words; the concealing of some parts, and the misrepresenting others, are I confess, no new things. How little soever a man is concerned on his own account at such ways of writing (the sense of his own Integrity giving a quiet that nothing can shake) yet so ill a Temper as some discover, and the Effects that may have in hardning bad men in the Prejudices they have taken up against Religion in general, and more particularly against the Clergy, gives a very melancholy Prospect.

One is tempted to think there must be something else at bottom, when so much Noise is made upon small and slight grounds.

Are any offended with the Zeal that I have expressed against Popery? Are others set against all moderate Principles, or the endeavours to fortify the Church by as great an Union, as could consist with her Principles, and with the desires of the most Eminent Men that have been of our Communion, both in the present and in the last Age? Are others such

Enemies to the Revolution, and to the Late Government, or rather to the present (for it is plainly settled upon the same bottom) that those who were zealous for it, and faithful to it, must be still pursued? Is a Zeal for awakening in the Clergy a just sense of the Pastoral Care, and the calling them to consider the Sacred Trust a little more diligently, and not to reckon their Livings as I have had cause to think some have done) only as Farms that they are to let as high, and serve as cheap as they can, Things to be deeply resented and revenged?

Whether one or all or more, or somewhat else, may not have some share more or less in the Treatment I have met with, I will not take upon me to determine. I never yet spoke with any one person that did not think there was somewhat more than what is contained in my *EXPOSITION*, that gave the Rise to the Eagerness which has been expressed upon that occasion.

Few Books have been written upon a better Authority than that of a Sovereign and a Superior: Few Books have been communicated to more or to Eminent Persons: Few Books have been more strictly examined, and more candidly censured: And, which perhaps has had no small

share in the Disgust it has given, few Books have been more read, and better receiv'd; and for above a Year after, there was so general an acquiescing in the Book, that it did not then appear that any thing was found out to be objected to it. These Writers know best with what Spirit they read it: whether it was on design to examine it candidly, or if it was not to try their Skill at wresting and finding fault with it right or wrong: In this their own Consciences only can and must be appealed to; and there I leave it.

Some in general thought it was too assuming to offer an Exposition of the Articles of the Church: But are not the *Oracles of God* more sacred things, than the Articles of any Church? And yet what are all *Paraphrases, Notes, and Commentaries*, but Expositions of the Word of God? Suppose any part of a Paraphrase or Commentary should be found to be wrong; do Men clamour upon that, and say the Scriptures are Corrupted? Is not the *Apostles Creed* one of the most Important parts both of our Worship, and of one of our Articles? but was it ever thought a Presumption to write an Exposition of that common Symbol of Christians? *Articles*, to which every one who serves in the Church, must subscribe willingly, and from their heart, professing that they believe them to be agreeable to the Word of God, ought to be well understood by those who declare their *Unfeigned Assent to them*.

Bishops are to try their Clergy by their understanding of these, and by their being able to prove them by Scripture. It seemed therefore a great

defect, that our Young Divines were not furnished with a full Instruction about them. *Rogers's Book* had its use and its course, and stood long without censure, notwithstanding his Partiality to one side: Yet of late, Opinions different from his, prevailing, his Book wore out of use, while no other came in its stead. This occasioned such an Ignorance of our Articles, that some of those who were to subscribe them, seemed scarce ever to have read them, or to know any thing concerning them. This was felt by several of the Bishops, who thought themselves bound to examine their Clergy with some Care, and did not know how to admit them to subscribe *Articles*, to which they were such strangers.

Besides all this, some of the Articles seemed to lean so entirely to an Absolute Predestination, that some upon that account scrupled the subscribing them; and others reproached our Church with this, that tho' our Articles look'd one way, yet our Doctors for most part went the other way. It was fit that such a Point should be well cleared; that it was in order to that, that the late *Blessed Queen* did command me to Explain Those First, which She afterwards enlarged to all the XXXIX.

When one thing fails, another must be set up to keep up a Clamour; and therefore my shewing in what Latitude the Articles may be signed, is made a Subject of much Censure; and my asserting that the taking them in the *Literal and Grammatical Sence* is enough, is made a matter of Declamation.

But

But whence did I take these words? Was it not from a Declaration of K. Charles the First's? And little doubt can be made, but that was prepared by Archbishop Laud: So that I have an Authority on my side, which is generally sacred with some People; tho' perhaps for my sake they will pay less Respect to it in this case. And this will be yet more evident, if the occasion of publishing that Declaration is considered. The Arminian Party (as they were call'd) was then favoured: To these it was objected, That they departed from the true Sense of the Articles: But it was answered by them, that since they took the Articles in their *Literal and Grammatical Sense*, they did not prevaricate: And to support this, that Declaration was set forth.

I do not deny but Men of the Calvinist Persuasion may think they have cause given them to complain of my leaving the Articles open to those of another Persuasion: But those of the Arminian side must be Men of a peculiar Tincture, who except to it on that account: Tho' without such an Enlargement of Sense, their subscribing them does not appear to agree so well with their Opinions, and with common Ingenuity. Some men will chuse to strike at one, whom without cause they make or account an Enemy, tho' they themselves are wounded by it.

It has been an Opinion very much entertained among us, and plainly insinuated by the Two Great Primates of England and Ireland, Laud and Bramhall, to which Vind. of Laud, Chap. 4. Bishop Stillingfleet was

very favourable, That these were *Articles of Communion*, and intended for a Peaceable Consent to an established Doctrine. If I had designed any such Latitude as is charged on me, I must have tried what could be made of this, and how far it might be carried: Yet I not only rejected this Notion in my *Exposition*, but even in my *History of the Reformation*, when I gave an account of these Articles; which shews how settled I have ever been in this Persuasion; tho' Bishop Stillingfleet excepted to that Passage, and thought that at least I might leave it out.

Hist. Refor.
2d Part, at
An. 1551.
pa. 169.

The mentioning this great Name obliges me to answer a very spiteful Insinuation, that it seems some men are resolved to keep up, as if I had be-lied the Dead, when I affirm that he expressed himself very fully in favour of this Work. Great pains are taken both by this and by another Writer, to shew that it cannot be believed; which is to accuse me of downright Falshood. I pray God forgive those who discover such an envenomed Spite. But tho' They shew no Charity, there are Others who have been so just as to offer their Testimony in the solemnest Manner, if required, that they heard that Eminent Prelate express himself much more fully concerning that Work, than I have pretended to relate. They are well known to be beyond all exception. Some of them have told me that they cannot doubt but they have reported this to Persons who have carried it to some of these very Writers.

Let them think of this way of

proceeding as they will, there is a Just and a Righteous Judge, and to Him they must one day give an Account of all these Arts of Detraction, and of all their hard, uncharitable, and unjust Censures. It is not so slight a matter as they seem to reckon it, to undermine the Credit, and detract from the Reputation of one, who, whatever he may be, has been engaged in a long Course of Publick Services and Eminent Stations, and who has never deserved any ill usage at their hands. If their Consciences are not past feeling, they will have some Sense of this: and if they are, I am much sorer for the ill state in which they are, than for all the bad usage I can receive from them.

A jealousy of *Socinianism* was an Artifice of the Popish Missionaries, that perhaps might do them service; and therefore it was no wonder if Men who studied their Morals at the Schools of the Jesuits, allowed of such Practices against their Adversaries, how unjust soever they knew them to be. But because this might have then served a turn, will men who pretend to any strictness of Conscience, go into the same defamatory Practices, when they may certainly know that there is no colour or shadow of truth in them? I appeal to all who have ever conversed familiarly with me, to all who have been formed by me in the Study of Divinity, or prepared and examined for Holy Orders; to all who have heard my Conferences with my Clergy, or have read either my Sermons or Treatises relating to those matters, how unjust this Charge against me is in every branch of it. How much

pains have I taken, and I thank God, not without some success, to shew how ill grounded that Prejudice against Mysteries is, which is taken from our not being able to comprehend them, or to reconcile them to our common Notions? How copiously have I insisted on the proper Object of worship, and shewed that it can be none but God; and that since the *New Testament* directs us to offer it to Jesus Christ, that therefore he must be truly God?

On these things I have in a course of 36 Years of my Ministry insisted much and frequently, but most particularly during these last 13 Years, in which I have served in a higher Station. This has appear'd so often, and with so much Zeal, that I might have expected fair treatment, even if it should have happened that something had fallen from me that wanted correction, or that needed some softning: But when my design in the main is so visible, and when the Colours that support these black Accusations are such forced and manifest Strainings of my words, against the sense that I have so copiously asserted, I have reason to complain of the Injustice of some few Men, but at the same time to appeal to the Justice of God who knows the falshood of that Charge, and the entire sincerity of my Heart in this matter; and my daily practice of worshipping Jesus Christ as truly God, to whom I believe the Eternal Word was as truly united in One Person, as the Soul and Body make one man.

This Author charges me for the Respect I have oft expressed for the

Soci-

Socinians. I do not deny but there is a Gravity in their way of Writing Controversy, that I wish were more imitated: And indeed some of our latter Writers have allowed themselves those liberties, that such samples are enough to prejudice a modest Reader against all they say. I know there is a sort of people, among whom bold and petulant strains, and scornful and virulent Invectives, pass for characters of assurance and victory. But let such Writers triumph as much as they please, with their factious Herd; Men of better Tempers, and of riper Judgments have another relish, and are inclined to suspect every thing that is set forth with so little of common decency, not to say Christianity. For this is it that I have often proposed the *Socinian* Writers, as Patterns: here is the ground of all that they can pretend, as to the value I set on them.

There is another particular which I am told has offended some better minds, and therefore I am willing to lay hold on all occasions to satisfy them. In one of the Letters that I writ from *Switzerland*, when I travell'd thro' those parts, I seem to have taken some pains, and to have searched into many MSS. on design to deny the Authenticalness of that verse in *St. John's Epistle*, c. 5. v. 7. of the *Three that bear witness in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost*; and this passes for a designed service to the *Socinian* Cause. But many great men, who have express'd much Zeal for the Doctrine of the Trinity, have yet doubted of this Passage; and it being the most impor-

tant of all the controverted Passages, where is there a just exception, if one who travell'd pretty quick, and so could not look at many places, took more particular notice of this, and gave a faithful Account of what he met with, both for it and against it?

This Writer attacks my discourse of the *Divinity of Christ*; but that is not the subject of the present debate, which runs only upon the *Exposition* of the Articles. When a Writer much of the size of the Charity of these men attack'd that Discourse, it was so fully vindicated, that all seem'd to acquiesce in it, so I will say no more of that.

A new thing is next started, and a great shew of reading is brought out, to discover what *Nestorius's* Heresy was, and that is laboured to be fastned on me: But he who writ all this, knew very well that *Nestorius's* way of illustrating the Union of the Divine & Humane Natures in Christ, was by comparing it to the Union of *Man and Wife*, or *Soul and Spirit*; whereas in opposition to him, the *Hypostatick Union* was illustrated by that of *Soul and Body*, which constitute *One Man*, and so did the Divine and Human Nature constitute one person in Christ. Now an ordinary measure of Candor would have taught this Writer to have observed, that all thro' both my Discourse of the Divinity of Christ, and the Exposition, I do still illustrate it thus, *That the Eternal Word was so inwardly united to the Human Nature of Jesus Christ, that by vertue of it God and Man were truly One Person, as our Soul and Body make*

Discourse of
the Divinity
of Christ.

One

One Man. In both these Books, the former specially, great pains is taken to give a clear Idea of the Union of Soul and Body ; for we are not now in an Age in which a few hard words (according to the way of the old Philosophy) will resolve all doubts ; men seek for clearer Notions. I have therefore endeavoured to explain our Souls being united to Matter, by an Indwelling, and a vital actuating of Matter ; and so I shew how our Bodies subsist by the subsistence of our Souls ; and from that I in some measure illustrate the *Union and Inhabitation of the Eternal Word in the Human Nature*, from which a *Communication of Names and Characters* arises, as from the Union of our Souls and Bodies. This I plainly distinguish from a *Prophetical or Moral Indwelling*. I confess, that as the term *Inhabitation* seems the more Philosophical, so I liked it the better, because it was also Scriptural.

But in Conclusion, I say, *we are not concerned whether Nestorius was misunderstood and hardly used, or not ; that is a matter of Fact.* We are only concerned in the Doctrine, which I assert is plain in the Scripture, *That tho' the Human Nature in Christ acted still according to its proper Character, and had a peculiar Will, yet there was such a constant presence, indwelling and actuation on it from the Eternal Word, as did constitute both Human and Divine Nature one Person.* A man who has not wrought himself up to a peculiar measure of Uncharitableness, will hardly find in all this where to fix his Censure. A great deal therefore must be made of this, That

we are not concerned in the matter of Fact with relation to Nestorius. Our Doctrine I thought was all that we were concerned in. Even the Pleaders for the Infallibility of Councils, confess they may Err in their Judgments as to Facts. The Doctrine of Infallibility in Facts, is very new, and can hardly plead Prescription. Two Eminent Men who were never censured for it, have very lately undertaken the Justification of *Nestorius* : And indeed Mr. *du Pin's* relation of that whole Controversie, looks very like an Apology for him. A man will not be inclined to have very good thoughts of that Affair, from *Cyril's* Conduct both at *Alexandria* before the Council sat, and during the whole progress of their proceedings after the Council, which gave no small scandal to the World ; so that I cannot see where the harm is, of waving the discussion of that part of Church History.

I see it not quite new for *Nestorianism* to be taken up as a Calumny that hath a sound like to produce a great Effect. The *Jesuits* have reproached the *Jansenists* with it : Some angry Divines in *Holland* have also thrown it about them ; so I must be contented to bear my share.

To make this Accusation look more dreadful, the story of *Samosatenus*, and of his Accuser, one of his own Presbyters, must be brought out. If Fame is to be credited, he had a particular end in this to justify himself, since it is believed, That this is the work of a Presbyter of mine ; only I wish he lookt after his Cure, as much as he does after the Accusing his Bishop.

shop. I shall only say, as to the severity which he seems to threaten me with, Men of such Tempers would make one grow soon weary of dealing with so much ill-nature and contention; or with those *whose teeth are as spears and arrows, and whose tongue is a sharp Sword.* If a sense of Duty, and of maintaining the Post in which the Providence of God has put one, did not call for a greater firmness; it would be no hard thing in our present circumstances, to imitate *Nazianzen's* practise. A man may be tempted to grow weary even of Life it self, when he sees he *dwells among them who hate Peace.*

As to what is Objected concerning the Cloud of Glory, I need only affirm, that I never thought that the material Cloud was to be worshipped, but that the outward Act of Adoration was directed towards it, only because it appeared that God was there visibly present: And that without that Inhabitation, Idolatry had been committed. But this Ob-

In the Vindication of my Four Discourses.

jection has been formerly so fully answered, that men who act honestly, would never have made use of it, without considering what has been already said upon that matter.

Can any thing be more trifling than the noise has been made about what I said concerning

Christ's Descent into Hell?

The Prefatory Discourse.

Are there greater Vouchers in this Age than

Usher, Hammond, Pearson, Stillingfleet, Barrow and Lightfoot? and have not I trod in their Steps? If some Di-

vines have so explained the *Descent into Hell*, that thereby they have made a Tautology in so short a Formulary as the Apostles Creed, can it be thought so heinous a thing, to suppose the like in our Article? This I state as the Opinion of some, but do not call it my own; so a mighty outcry must be made, because I allow this is a sense that some have put on the Article, which they think the words will well bear: And is it not so? where is the Fault? I see it not: But Malice is sharper-sighted.

I will not follow that angry Writer through all that he has rak'd together. I am not so much his Enemy, as to endeavour to expose him: he has done it too much himself. But before he engaged in it, he should have been furnished with a little more Learning, and with a great deal more of that which is much better, both more Integrity, and more Charity.

Yet he is much more excusable than this second Writer; for he having so small a measure of knowledg, and that chiefly from second hand, having heard more from another, as I am told, than he seems to have gathered by his own reading; he, I say, may be more innocently mistaken, than one who has taken more pains, and has considered things more carefully; I wish I could add, more honestly. I will not follow him into his dark Notions of *Satisfaction*: I take those that the *Scripture* offers, and rest in them, leaving Subtilties that are not in *Scriptures*, to men that delight in such Metaphysicks. Only when he cites so Voluminous an Author as *Grotius*, on design to give

give me the *Lye*, he should have marked the place. I find nothing like it, but a great deal to the contrary in his Book *de Satisfactione*; which was the most proper to be cited on this occasion.

It has not been an easy thing to bring me to write any thing in my own Justification. As to the first of these Books, I never yet spoke with any person that thought there was any one single passage in it that altered their thoughts of any part of my Book; as in the reading it over, I did not feel any one part of it that pinched, or that would dispose me to alter any one word in a subsequent Edition. Something of an Art of Writing I observed in it, that had too much both of Craft and Spite.

Some fancied that a Book, how trifling soever, unanswered, might make an Impression; and that silence upon such an Attack, might look like Conviction or Confession: By those I was pressed to write somewhat by way of Answer: Yet I could not be prevailed on, till this second Attempt made me think it might be proper now to say somewhat; which I hope I have done in a way that became me, and the Station I am in, rather than in a way which those angry men might have justly drawn on themselves.

In a word, to conclude this con-

tentious Strain with some better thoughts: Is this a time for Clergymen to give such a diversion to so bad an Age as that we live in? What will the common Cause of Christianity, of Religion, and of our Church gain by it? Are we not sensible that we furnish the Enemies of our Faith with prejudices, not only against our selves, but even against our most holy Faith; while we wound it thro' one anothers sides? And when the Concerns, or rather the Visible Preservation of the Protestant Religion, and of common Safety and Liberty, are now in so high a Crisis, and so near a great Issue, what can be thought of those who seem to Employ their time and studies with so much earnestness in raising new Broils, and engaging us into such violent Animosities? Where is the Wisdom as well as Charity of such Proceedings? Is not this a stroke from God, which seems to be a fore-runner of more dreadful ones?

Oh that God would pour out another Spirit upon us; that we the *Priests and Ministers of the Lord*, may fall prostrate before him, and say, *Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thy Heritage to confusion.* With this Thought I end this, being the Eve of the Fast-day, and therefore I turn my self to Exercises more suitable to this Great Occasion.

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DUBLIN, Re-Printed for John Ware, Bookseller; and are to be Sold at his Shop in High-Street, over against St. Michael's Church. 1702.

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